/59 cont./

595 From this list of families one gains the impression that monogamy predominates. But I was assured by my informants that those warriors who thus far have only one wife would be glad to take a second or even a third one, as was customary among their forefathers. The small number of persons in the tribes, however, has caused a shortage of women, so that most of the men are forced to be content with one spouse.

/60/ 3. Political Structure

69

These low population figures could, moreover, arouse the suspicion that it is not tribes, but only tribal divisions that are involved here, especially on account of the connubium in which they live, or merely groups. The chiefs and war chiefs named, however, told me emphatically that the Surára as well as the Pakidái were formerly large and mighty and distributed in many malokas. [185] They regard achieving this size again as a goal worth striving for.

622 An institutional chiefdom with a definitely established succession prevails in both tribes. If the chief dies, his next younger brother automatically takes his place. Only if the youngest brother is dead may the first-born son of the oldest brother, who by that time is usually an older man, occupy the office of chief.

624 701 In addition there is the war chief. This position is not hereditary; rather, the bravest warrior is chosen for it. During peacetimes he has no prerogatives whatever and lives like an ordinary member of the tribe. Only during military encounters does he take over the [622] leadership, while the real chief, as religious head, doctor, and teacher, is protected and does not take part; the same is true for his brothers.

622 159 The Surára chief Hewemão, very bold and intelligent, is a truly great personality; his orders are respected by all members of the tribe without opposition. When he was still a youth, his father, Xoromão, was killed with two arrow shots by Makuxí /Macusi/ Indians. Hewemão eldest brother, Xaraíma, assumed the succession, but he died of a fever about eight years ago.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

'I am Uarema,' he declared to his Guayca kinsmen, who looked on him with hostile eyes because he was wearing trousers, 'Uarema, son of Measi. I was here as a boy. A long time I have been with "the rationals" [the civilized men] and I have grown to manhood. You are my people.'

His turning up in this fashion had a touch of the fabulous about it, and his kinsmen took him along without ill-treating him. When they found him to be a man of many accomplishments, and the old men remembered how he had disappeared during Uagna's time, after an encounter with the Samatari from the Aracosa lands, they kept him with them as their rightful chief, giving him unlimited freedom of action. As his obedient subjects they left it all to him.

Uarema had never taken to civilization. For him, it had lacked something. What it had lacked, we cannot guess: the civilization of the Lower Guiana rivers may be bounded by the cloth hammock and the bottle of rum, the loose woman and the pack of cards, but it cannot be ranked any lower than the barbarianism of the Guayca, eaters of worms and snakes. But now, after his experience of life with 'the rationals', neither could the young man endure the ceaseless warfare which engaged his own peoples. The broken heads he saw round the fire in the evenings, the howls of the medicine-men at their exorcisings—all this was anathema to him. He told his kinsfolk they had better put it all aside, and grow something. From the Soto they could obtain seeds and roots. Much manioc was needed, because without it one was always hungry. Sugar-cane was a pleasant thing to suck at any time, and the children loved it. Above all, there must be bananas, as far as eye could see—the forest must be transformed into a huge garden of fruits, there for the picking. Thus, with his head full of ideas which owed their origin to the years he had spent in civilization, Luis Antonio founded a new Guayca people. They were Guayca Indians no longer, but peasants—peasants who cared for the tilling of the soil and a sure supply of food. These Guayca called themselves after him, Uarema. They inhabited two big homesteads an hour distant from the Mercvari river—a little above the mouth of the Canaracuni.

Now Luis Antonio wanted to stay with us and work, because he needed cloth for his people. We gave him what little we had been able to save from the greedy hands of Pancho's men, and he went off for a brief visit to his tribe, intending to return to Kirisochi in four days' time.